

# LAS VEGAS GAZETTE.

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**Las Vegas Gazette.**

LOUIS HOMMEL,

Editor & Publisher.

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Maj. A. B. Carey, Paymaster.  
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### DEAF SMITH, THE SPY.

Despite the cloud that hangs over the closing days of Sam Houston's life, I have always entertained a strong admiration for the hero of San Jacinto. I am conscious of his weaknesses, some of which are quite glaring; but he had a certain pluck, a stubbornness, which commanded the respect of even his enemies.

There is an incident of Sam Houston's career that is not generally known, but which brings out as prominently as any act of his life, that sterling courage to which I refer, and at the same time brings into notice one of the most extraordinary men of whom I ever heard—the person known as Deaf Smith; the Texas Spy, and intimate friend of Sam Houston.

At the time Texas succeeded in establishing her independence, the constitution provided that Austin should be the permanent capital, where the public archives were to be kept; but the provision was inserted giving the President discretionary power to remove it temporarily to some safe point, in case of the inroads of a foreign enemy, or the power of a sudden insurrection.

About two years after the Texas revolution the Comanches became so daring as to commit several outrages in the sight of the capital itself, whereupon Houston considered the condition of matters warranted his availing himself of the provisions already mentioned.

He resided at that time at Washington, on the Brazos, from which he despatched a messenger with an order commanding his subordinate functionaries to send the records to that place, which he announced to be the seat of government *pro tempore*.

This produced the most intense excitement at Austin. The hotel keepers, grocers, boarding house and gambling saloon proprietors foresaw irretrievable ruin. They gathered together and denounced the proposed "outrage." Gradually the mutterings took shape, until, despite the constitutional warranty for the step, it was resolved that the thing should not be done.

A mass meeting of the citizens and farmers of the neighborhood was held, and the most fiery and incendiary addresses were made. When the feelings of all were worked up to the proper pitch, it was unanimously resolved to then prevent the execution of the mandate by armed resistance.

A company of armed men was organized on the spot. At their head was placed one of the most noted duellists in the country. He had achieved quite a fame during the war just closed, and was unquestionably a brave man, and as unprincipled as he was desperate. He was a man of no little importance, and it was with no little pride that he took charge of the men who unanimously called upon him to be their leader.

So noted was Colonel Morton that a great many were convinced that when General Houston learned that he had headed this determined band he would hasten to retrace his ground and recall the offending command. But they mistook the mettle of the old hero.

Colonel Morton, puffed up with his brief authority, declared that if the President did succeed in removing the records by power of overwhelming number he would hunt him down like a wolf, and slay him wherever he found him, whether on the streets or in bed. He went so far as to send him a letter to that effect, and here is the identical answer he received:

"If the people of Austin do not send the archives, I shall instantly come and take them, and if Colonel Morton can kill me he is welcome to my carcase."

"Sa Houston,"  
On the reception of the answer the excitement became greater than ever. The guard was doubled around the State House, and picket sentinels were stationed along the road to the capital, the military paraded from morning till night, and a caucus of the ringleaders was held in the city hall. Everything threatened a coming storm.

Thus matters stood for several days, when the caucus at the city hall was startled by the sudden arrival of a stranger among them.

He did not knock at the door nor attempt to ask admission there, but, unnoticed, climbed with the celerity of a monkey a small oak which stood beside the wall, and without a word of warning sprang through a lofty window, and landed in the very room where the caucus was assembled.

The stranger was clad in buckskin, carried a long and heavy rifle in his hand, wore at the bottom of his suspender an immense bowie knife, and held in his leather belt a couple of enormous pistols. He was very tall, thin, and straight as an arrow, and as lithe and supple as a panther, with a swarthy complexion, long jet-black hair, a rigid, iron-like countenance, eyes of gliding blackness, and as piercing as the point of a stiletto.

His sudden appearance among them was so startling that they instinctively grasped their arms.

"Who are you that come among gentlemen uninvited?" thundered Col. Morton, staring at him furiously.

The stranger turned his black eyes upon him, and stared at him, but the only answer he made was by placing his fingers upon his lips.

"Who are you? Speak, or I'll run you through!" shouted Morton, driven to fury by the cool, contemptuous gaze of the other, who now took his finger from his lips and placed it upon his knife.

The exasperated Colonel drew back his dagger and was advancing upon the stranger, when several interposed and held him back.

"Let him alone, Morton, don't you see he's crazy?"

At this juncture Judge Webb stepped forward and spoke to the stranger in a kind, respectful manner.

"My good friend, I suppose you have made a mistake. This is a private meeting to which none but members are admitted."

The stranger did not seem to understand the words, but he did the complimentary manner. His iron features relaxed somewhat, and stepping to a table upon which were implements of writing he took up a pen and rapidly traced the words.

"I am deaf!"

He then held up the paper to the spectators as a natural apology for his seeming discourtesy.

"Will you be obliging enough to inform me what your business is with this meeting?" The stranger answered this question by handing a letter to the Judge, the superscription upon which was, "To the Citizens of Austin." The seal was broken and it was read aloud.

"Follow Citizens:—Though in error and deceived by the arts of traitors, I will give you three more days to decide whether you will surrender the public archives. At the end of that time you will please let me know your decision."

"SAM HOUTSTON."

After the letter was read, the deaf man waited a few moments for a reply, then turned to leave the hall. At this moment Colonel Morton interposed with a lowering brow, and beckoned him to the table. The stranger obeyed. Col. Morton wrote:

"You were brave enough to insult me by your threatening looks five minutes ago; are you brave enough to give me satisfaction?"

The stranger instantly penned the reply. "I am at your service."

The Colonel again wrote: "Who will be your second?"

This was the answer: "I am too generous to seek an advantage, and too brave to fear any on the part of others. I therefore never need the aid of a second."

Morton wrote: "Name your terms."

The stranger wrote without a moment's hesitation: "Time, sunset this evening; place, the left bank of the Colorado, opposite Austin, weapons, rifles; distance, a hundred yards. Do not fail to be in time."

The last sentence was not calculated to soothe the feelings of the irritated Colonel, and he compressed his lips as he read it.

The next moment the stranger strode across the floor and disappeared through the window in the same manner he had entered.

"Is it possible that you are going to fight that man?" exclaimed Judge Webb.

"He is a mute if not a maniac. Such a meeting I fear will tarnish the lustre of our laurels."

"You are mistaken," said the Colonel with a smile. "That man is a hero whose fame stands in the records of a dozen battles and almost as many bloody duels. Besides, he is the favorite emissary and bosom friend of Houston. If he has the good fortune to kill him, I think the President will reward his valor."

"You know him then? Who is he?" asked several.

"Impossible! It cannot be. Smith was slain at San Jacinto," replied Judge Webb.

"There again your Honor is mistaken," said Morton. "The story of Smith's death is a mere fiction, gotten up by Houston for the purpose of saving his friend from the vengeance of several Texans, on whose conduct he had acted the part of a spy. I learned the artifice a year ago."

"Then you are a madman yourself. Colonel. Deaf Smith was never known to miss his mark. He has been known to have brought down ravens in the air, and has picked off comanches and Mexicans at a distance of two hundred yards."

"The thing is settled. I fancy I can do a little of that business myself."

"But for God's sake," persisted the Judge, becoming excited, "I don't want you to be murdered."

"His life is going to be?" asked the Colonel, as he coolly smoked his cigar and smiled in his usual way.

"Why, you, if you undertake to fight Deaf Smith."

"This thing is all arranged as I said a few moments ago, and I wouldn't back out if I were certain to be shot; for what is death to dishonor?"

Such was the absurd sentiment in Texas at the time, and such, we fear, is too prevalent among civilized nations.

Toward evening a large crowd assembled at the place appointed for the meeting and so reckless were the people regarding the issue at stake—a human life, perhaps two—that there were all manner of jokes, and not a few wagers laid upon this result.

At length, as the sun sank below the horizon, the two mortal antagonists appeared on the open space and stood back to back.

At the waving of the handkerchief they began pacing off from each other, both stepping exactly together, as if they were keeping time to the tap of a drum. They completed the distance at the same instant, then they wheeled so as to face each other and to fire as soon as possible.

As they were separated by a considerable distance, they raised their rifles and paused a moment to aim. The pause was long enough for the crowd to glance from one to the other, and not the expression of their faces. Colonel Morton was calm and smiling; but the smile was a murderous one—far more terrible than the severest scowl could be. Deaf Smith, however, was as rigid and passionless as ever. His profile might have been supposed to have been cut in stone, so expressionless was it. The former was attired in the finest broadcloth, and the other was attired in a smoke-tinted leather.

The next instant both rifles exploded simultaneously. Colonel Morton gave a smothered shriek, sprang upward, and fell to the ground—dead. Deaf Smith stood unmoved and began reloading his rifle, while being done he turned away and disappeared in the adjoining forest.

Three days after, Gen. Houston, accompanied by Deaf Smith, and ten other men made their appearance in Austin and without further opposition removed the State papers.

Deaf Smith, as I remarked before, was one of the most extraordinary men ever known in the West. He appeared in Texas at an early period and resided there until his death, which occurred over a dozen years ago. He had many ardent friends but nothing definite was ever learned regarding his early life. Whether he ever acquainted Houston with it was never known, for the old hero never enlightened any one

as far as I can learn upon the matter.

When Deaf Smith was questioned upon the matter, he laid his finger upon his lips, and if pressed, his black eyes gave such a rebuke that no one dared question him further. Although deprived of the faculty of hearing, nature, as is often the case, seemed to compensate him by giving him an eye as keen and far-reaching as an eagle's and a smell as perfect as a raven's. He could discern Comanches so far off on the prairie that they were invisible to the eye of the most experienced rangers and his friends declare he could scent a Mexican when miles away.

Gifted in this extraordinary manner, it will be seen that he possessed just the qualities to make him a successful spy; and his services to Houston during the Texas war for independence were invaluable. He generally went alone and very rarely failed to obtain the information desired.

He had many erratic habits. No persuasion could induce him to sleep under the roof of a house. With his blanket wrapped about him he loved to lie out in the open air, under the star-gemmed firmament.

When not engaged as a spy, he lived by hunting and was often absent for months on his excursions. He was a genuine son of nature, at home only when upon the prairies or in the woods, or when engaged in the thrilling excitement of the hunt, or the more fiery thrill of the clash of arms and the roar of battle.

Shut out by his infirmity from the close companionship of friends, he made the inanimate things of earth his friends. Wherever there was water or land, barren rocks or tangled brakes of wild cane, there was Deaf Smith's home, and there he was happy; but in the streets of great cities, in all the great thoroughfares of men, wherever there was flattery or fawning, base cunning or craven fear, there was Deaf Smith an alien and exile.—People.

A correspondent in speaking of the extent to which drinking was carried only a few years ago in San Francisco says: It is said that the Arabs have a thousand names to designate the lion. Scarcely less multitudinous was the California drinking vocabulary. "From the time the habitual drinker takes his morning cocktail, to stimulate an appetite for breakfast, he supplies himself with an indefinite number of fancy little compounds that have the effect of keeping him always more or less brimmed. And where saloons line the streets, and you can not meet a friend, or make a new acquaintance, or strike a bargain without an invitation to drink, which amounts to a command—and where the days are hot, and you see men issuing from the saloons licking their lips after their iced mint juleps—and where Brown, who has a party with him, meets you as you enter the saloon and says 'Join us'—and where it is the fashion to accept such invitations, and rude to refuse them—what can a thirsty man do? One reason," he continues, "for so many drinks being consumed is the fact that there is ever some liberal soul who is not content till he has ranged some twenty of his acquaintances at the bar; and when each one is supplied with a 'drink,' he says, 'My respects to you, gentlemen; when the twenty rounds are simultaneously thrown back, and down go 'Straight drancies,' 'Queen Charlottes,' 'Stone fences,' and so on through the whole score."

When there are so many ready to treat, there can of course be no lack of those willing to avail themselves of the chance of coming in for a share of the general order for "drinks for the crowd." There is a story told of a swagging old Judge who was wont to find some sport in taking advantage of the propensity of these hangers-on to indulge their libidinous propensities at the expense of others.

"Come, let us all take a drink," he would exclaim to the thirsty group in waiting for such a summons. The bar is forthwith lined with the motley crowd, each ordering his favorite tipple. At the word of command from the Judge the potatoes are simultaneously disposed of. "And now," the proposer would say, drawing a long breath of satisfaction, "now let's all pay our drinks," which each would sorrowfully proceed to do.

When I used to tend store at Altoona, the old man came around one day, and says he: "Boys, the one who sells the most between now and Christmas gets a vest pattern as a present. Maybe we didn't work for that vest pattern! I tell you there were some tall stories told in praise of goods about that time; but the tallest talker, and the one who had the most cheek of any of us, was a certain Donald Squires, who roomed with me. He could talk a dollar out of a man's pocket when the man only intended to spend a six-pence; and the woman—Lord bless you—they just handed over their pocket books to him and let him lay out what he liked for them. One night John woke me up with, 'By Joe, old fellow, if you think that ere's got cotton in it, I'll bring down the sheep it was cut from and make him own his old wool. I want wear out five years, and they are as good now as when I first put them on. Take it at thirty cents and I'll say you don't owe me anything. Eh—too dear? Well, call it twenty-eight cents. What d'ye say? All right. It's a bargain.' I could feel John's hand playing about the bedclothes for an instant; then rip! tear! went something or another, and I hid my head under the blankets, perfectly convulsed with laughter, and perfectly sure that John had torn the best sheet from top to bottom. When I awoke next morning I found the back of my night shirt split from the tail to the collar-band."

A correspondent of the Cincinnati Commercial says:

The Woodhull-Claffin sisters are wrecked at last. They made a great deal of noise during the six or seven years since they came to this city from Cincinnati. They have failed in everything they have undertaken. They started a stock broker's office in Wall street, amid the blowing of

trumpets, but they failed utterly in the business, and could neither get customers nor make money, though they said they were backed by a millionaire. They started a paper, but it burst at the beginning of this year, after they had according to their own story, sunk money in it at the rate of three hundred dollars a week. They took a large house in an aristocratic part of the city, but they could not pay their rent, and were turned out of it. They published books which did not sell. They failed in the clairvoyant business, and they failed as leaders of the spiritualists.—Mrs. Woodhull tried to stir up a sensation by running as a presidential candidate, but she failed completely. Her sister, Miss Claffin, tried lately to raise a sensation by getting elected colonel of a colored regiment of militia but she failed.

The same person has lately been making noisy efforts to get on the stage, but in this also she failed. They both tried to secure notoriety as leaders of the International Society, but they failed again. At everything they have tried they have broken down, and at last they have been compelled to announce that they could not, in the whole city, find a decent house that they would be allowed to live.

Mrs. Woodhull at least is a woman of talent, and possessed of extraordinary energy. It is really sad to see such woman leading such a career, and it is sad to see the way in which it is coming to an end. She might have been an ornament of her sex and an honor to society.

A German agricultural paper prints a plea for long furrows. The turning of the plow and the commencing of a new furrow require more exertion in the plowman and the team than continued work on a straight line; and how great may really be the loss to time from frequent interruptions in short turns may be shown by the following calculations:—In a field 225 feet long, five and a half hours out of ten are used in re-directing the plow; with a length of 575 feet, four hours are sufficient for the purpose; and when the plow can proceed without interruption for 800 feet, only one and a half hour of the daily working time is consumed.

A little country boy ran away from school on Wednesday to go cutting. During the expedition he fell twice out of one tree, to the immediate danger of breaking his neck, was licked by one of the other boys whose breath was materially lessened by stumbling against his stomach, ran a sly into his knee, and was bitten on the neck by a new kind of bug. When he got home his father anointed him with the boss end of a billiard cue, and the next day at school the teacher escorted him twice around the room by his sorest ear. He says that nuts are so worry that it don't pay to go after them.

If you lose a watch, dog, or child, or if you desire people not to trust your wife, you rush to your local paper, knowing that everyone will read the advertisement. But you will plod along in business year after year, without calculating how much you are losing by not advertising it.

A school girl during her examination repeatedly called the patriarchs patridges. Whereupon one of the auditors remarked: She is making game of the patriarchs. This Sidney Smith said, was the most perfect pun he knew.

Signs and Tokens.

The Gridiron.—To take down the gridiron from the nail where it is hanging with the left hand, is a sign that there will be a broil in the kitchen.

The Mirror.—If a mirror is broken it is a sign that a good looking inglass will be missed in that house.

A Funeral.—To meet a funeral procession is a sign of death.

Pocket-book.—To lose a pocket-book containing a quantity of silver is unlucky.

## CLIPPINGS.

An Illinois editor sports the name of Doubleblower.

New York pays one million of dollars yearly for gas.

Why is a mouse like a load of hay? Because the cat'll eat it.

A new and very fashionable shade of color is known as neutre.

Berlin gets twenty-four hundred American newspapers daily.

A college of journalism is to be opened in Paris next January.

If your pianoforte should catch fire, the best plan is to play on it.

Blue and black are the only colors admissible for gentlemen's neck wear this Fall.

A baby was recently left on a doorstep in Paducah, Ky., so drugged that it soon died.

People are discussing the propriety of abandoning the fashion of New Year's Day culling.

The wealth of Iowa, equally divided, would give \$601 03 to every person in the State.

The census of the city of Vienna has been completed, and shows a population of 900,000.

An exchange paper states that Ben. Franklin's writing desk was recently sold for ten cents.

Pride and vanity are purveyors of trouble and danger; proud persons are never safe nor happy.

A proper merchant has for his motto: "Early to bed early to rise; never get tight, and advertise."

One hundred and twenty-one patents have been granted on windmills in the United States since 1854.

Woman ought to do all she can to make this earth a paradise for men, as it was all her fault she lost the other.

"Keep 'em alive, boy! keep 'em alive!" said an old physician to his young brother practitioner. "Dead men pay no bills."

Apothecarieness is in new word which the present generation has found it necessary to invent for the benefit of prosperity.

Of all sad words of tongue or pen, The saddest are these you might have Ben.

Franklin's desk for pennies ten. A lady informs us that she finds more difficulties in husbanding her nine daughters than she does in husbanding her resources.

President Thiers has received a despatch from President Grant congratulating him upon the progress of republicanism in France.

A young lady in a shirt factory at Lewiston performed the feat of stitching into the shirts 96 bosoms, in the space of five hours.

A peace-maker at Gilman, Ill., put an end to a quarrel between two of his neighbors by drawing a revolver and shooting both of them.

A Detroit rough threatened to "put a head" on a clergyman of that town, and was rewarded for kindness by a black and bluishness about the eyes.

At the really select parties and receptions of the coming season wine will be banished from the table and no "cold tea" provided in the gentleman's dressing room.

The present absurd fashion of wearing the front hair "banged" or "ingated" in English nurseries, where the hair of very young children is cut in this fashion to keep it out of their eyes.

"Home is the place for boys, said Sprinks to his eldest pride and joy. "Yes," said the youngest dutifully, "I like to stay at home all the time, but ma send me off to school."

A French woman said that she never loved anything. "You love your children?" suggested a friend. "When they were little," she said. "And you love diamonds?" "When they are large."

Subscribe for the GAZETTE and send it to your friends.